



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

JUN - 8 2001

Mr. Robert Everitt  
Regional Director  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
16018 Mill Creek Boulevard  
Mill Creek, Washington 98012

Dear Mr. Everitt:

Thank you for your letter requesting a temporary extension to the Letter of Authorization allowing the State of Washington to lethally remove individually identifiable California sea lions that are preying on winter-run Lake Washington steelhead. The temporary extension would prevent the expiration of the existing authorization until the State prepares a formal request to extend the authorization for an additional four years.

This letter modifies the State's current letter of authorization dated September 23, 1997, by changing the date of expiration in condition 10 to December 15, 2001. No other terms or conditions are affected.

Because condition 4 of the current authorization limits removal of predatory sea lions to the period between January 1 and May 31 of each year, this modification would not allow the removal of any California sea lions; therefore, it would result in no impact to the human environment. This action is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act because it is merely an extension of the period of effectiveness of a previously analyzed action.

Such an analysis, however, will be required when the National Marine Fisheries Service considers your request for a 4-year extension of the authorization. To facilitate an appropriate analysis under NEPA, I encourage you to provide information on the status of California sea lions and the steelhead run, as well as the status of other conservation actions to promote recovery of the steelhead run.



I appreciate your interest in sea lion and steelhead issues and look forward to our continued cooperation in the conservation of our Nation's living marine resources.

Sincerely,

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fDonald R. Knowles, Director  
Office of Protected Resources